

**BRITISH
AMERICAN FOOTBALL
ASSOCIATION**

**FOOTBALL RULES
AND
INTERPRETATIONS**

2020 EDITION

Original material © BAFA 2020
ISBN: 978-0-244-86661-7

Foreword

The rules are revised each year by IFAF to improve the sport's level of safety and quality of play, and to clarify the meaning and intent of rules where needed. The principles that govern all rule changes are that they must:

- be safe for the participants;
- be applicable at all levels of the sport;
- be coachable;
- be administrable by the officials;
- maintain a balance between offense and defence;
- be interesting to spectators;
- not have a prohibitive economic impact; and
- retain some affinity with the rules adopted by NCAA in the USA.

IFAF statutes require all member federations to play by IFAF rules, except in the following regards:

1. national federations may adapt Rule 1 to meet local needs and circumstances, provided no adaption reduces the safety of the players or other participants; BAFA takes advantage of that to allow (for example) 90-yard fields and reduced end zones that are our solution to using rugby pitches and the like;
2. competitions may adjust the rules according to (a) the age group of the participants and (b) the gender of the participants;
3. competition authorities have the right to amend certain specific rules (listed on page 39);
4. national federations may restrict the above so that the same regulations apply to all competitions under their jurisdiction.

These rules apply to all contests involving BAFA-affiliated teams and take effect from 1st March 2020. (**Exception:** Competitions that began before 1st March 2020 will continue to use 2019 rules until the end of their competition).

For brevity, male pronouns are used extensively in this book, but the rules are equally applicable to female and male participants.

BAFA has established a Rules Committee to discuss and decide future changes to this book. The Committee is also our liaison to IFAF on rules matters. You may make suggestions for changes at any time, but to be eligible for consideration for the following year they must be received by 1st September.

Jim Briggs (Editor)
on behalf of the
BAFA Rules Committee

Those who find it necessary to write to the editor for interpretations of rules or play situations will receive prompt replies if they number their questions and email them to rules@britishamericanfootball.org.

The editor would like to thank the following people who assisted in the production of this edition of the rulebook (GB except where stated):

Michael Bilica (USA)

Tom Blakeson

Amir Brooks

Steve Egan

James Ford-Bannister

Steven Hall

Perttu Hautala (Finland)

Thomas Hofbauer (Austria)

Chris Jarvis

James Kilbane

Lewis Lebolt (Sweden)

Ali May

Richard McEwan

Paul Mercer (Australia)

Richard Moger

Russell Newton

Peter Parsons

Ian Sneddon

Shawn Sombati

Leanne Spencer

Paul Sutton

Pete Thom

Frank Thomson

Paul Todd

Mark Wilson

Cover image by Betty Brooks

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Rules changes..... | 4 |
| Points of emphasis | 6 |
| The Football Code..... | 10 |
| BAFA Regulations | 13 |
| 1 Basic principles..... | 13 |
| 2 Registration..... | 17 |
| 3 Code of conduct | 19 |
| 4 Regulations on organisations | 26 |
| 5 Game regulations | 29 |
| 6 Competition complaints and appeals | 30 |
| 7 Procedures for regulatory cases | 31 |
| 8 Procedures for appeals | 33 |
| 9 Grievance Procedure | 34 |
| Rules and Interpretations | 39 |
| Rule 1 — The Game, Field, Players and Equipment..... | 41 |
| Rule 2 — Definitions | 58 |
| Rule 3 — Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions | 77 |
| Rule 4 — Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds..... | 97 |
| Rule 5 — Series of Downs, Line to Gain | 103 |
| Rule 6 — Kicks..... | 107 |
| Rule 7 — Snapping and Passing the Ball | 122 |
| Rule 8 — Scoring..... | 139 |
| Rule 9 — Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules..... | 148 |
| Rule 10 — Penalty Enforcement | 170 |
| Rule 11 — The Officials: Jurisdiction and Duties..... | 179 |
| Rule 12 — Video judge..... | 180 |
| Rule 13 — Standards for Game Management | 184 |
| Summary of penalties | 197 |
| Officials’ Signals..... | 208 |
| Appendix A — Guidelines for Game Officials for Serious On-Field Player Injuries..... | 211 |
| Appendix B — Guidelines for Game Officials and Game Management To Use Regarding Lightning..... | 212 |
| Appendix C — Concussions..... | 214 |
| Appendix D — Field Diagrams | 216 |
| Appendix E — Equipment: Additional Details | 222 |
| BAFRA Terms and Conditions | 227 |
| Index of Rules and Interpretations | 234 |